

Roundabouts

A safer kind of intersection

Roundabouts are gaining popularity in the United States due to their proven track record of providing safer and more efficient traffic flow. These circular intersections have flared entryways marked by yield signs and a centerpiece that deflects traffic, causing drivers to slow down. You may have seen other types of circular intersections such as a traffic circle, but roundabouts are far more efficient. Although roundabouts may seem foreign at first, they are very simple to use and will greatly improve safety.

Roundabout benefits

Nervous about roundabouts? Research shows people embrace roundabouts quite quickly. In a recent multi-location study, 22-44 percent of drivers were in favor of roundabouts before their construction compared with 48-67 percent soon afterward, and 57-87 percent after roundabouts were in place for one year or more. As you can see, it doesn't take long before people begin to appreciate the many benefits of roundabouts.

Slower and safer

Roundabouts offer a unique opportunity for landscaping that standard intersections do not. The center deflector is a perfect place for flowers, trees, or other aesthetic design features. But most importantly, the center deflector causes traffic to slow down. Slower speeds reduce the severity of crashes and allow drivers and pedestrians more time to react to each other, thus increasing safety. In fact, studies by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety show that roundabouts have:

- 90 percent fewer fatal crashes
- 76 percent less crashes with injury
- 30-40 percent reduction in pedestrian crashes
- 10 percent less bicycle crashes
- Fewer conflict points, meaning fewer opportunities for crashes